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LOS ANGELES COUNTY SUPERVISORS MARK RIDLEY-THOMAS AND MICHAEL D. ANTONOVICH SEEK TO CREATE A BLUE RIBBON COMMISSION ON CHILD PROTECTION FOR CHILDREN IN THE COUNTY'S CARE

Following the heartbreaking death of 8-year-old Gabriel Fernandez last month and revelations that the L.A. County Department of Children and Family Services and other agencies failed to intervene despite multiple abuse allegations made by family and teachers, Los Angeles County Supervisors Mark Ridley-Thomas and Michael D. Antonovich have authored a motion to create an independent commission tasked with digging deeper into why child protection reforms have not been implemented.

The Blue Ribbon Commission on Child Protection Review would be made up of two members appointed by each supervisor by July 1, 2013. The commission would investigate all previously delayed or failed efforts to implement reforms and provide recommendations for a feasible plan of action at DCFS. The commission would also analyze the current structure and scope of DCFS as well as ways to increase cooperation between the departments of Mental Health, Public Health, the Los Angeles County Sheriff, District Attorney, Dependency Court and commissions to better protect children.

"When the lives of children are at stake, we simply cannot stand by and hope that reforms take hold," said Chairman Ridley-Thomas. "The hope is that this commission will examine the actions, or inaction, that have led to the deaths of innocent children and develop a true action plan not a band-aid solution."

Added Supervisor Antonovich: "This commission will examine the full scope of departments involved, including Mental Health, Public Health and law enforcement, as

well as the current public policies in place to more effectively help prevent future tragedies and improve outcomes for children."

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